

P L A N N I N G C O M M I S S I O N

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2001

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

ROLL CALL:

Present, Commissioners: Parsons, Mathewson, Petersen,
Purcell, Torre, Wiecha

Absent, Commissioners: Gibson

Present Staff: Community Development Director Ewing,
Principal Planner de Melo, Contract Planner Schimpp, Contract
Planner Haag, Associate Planner Ouse, City Attorney
Zaffrerano, Recording Secretary Flores

AGENDA STUDY SESSION: None

AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None

COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Action Minutes of: November 21, 2000, December 5, 2000, December 19, 2000, January 2, 2001.

C Torre said that she was absent from the January 2, 2001 meeting, and therefore it was inaccurate could not have that sheseconded a motion for 1040 Alameda de las Pulgas. C Gibson Mathewson said that he would take credit for provided the second.

C Purcell referred to the December 19 minutes and wanted clarification on the 1741 Francis Court Public Hearing about whether the 926 square feet was the total existing square feet or the additional square feet. PP de Melo reported that staff would look into that issue but assumed believed that 926 to be the additional square footage. C Purcell said that on the December 5 minutes, under Community Forum, it was the California Council League. On the second page of the December 5 minutes, she believed that the Commission was mentioned as giving an option on an issue that she believed Council had spoken to instead. CDD Ewing thought it was the Commission. On the January 2 meeting, she made the suggestion to add to the Study Session that the extension had already expired. On page 4 of the January 2 minutes, the second item stated by Mr. Zemanek should read that he would obtain a permit from the Air Quality mManagement District.

On page 5, under Reports, Studies, Updates, and Comments, she noted that C Purcell had given a preliminary draft.

C Petersen made the corrections that the formation of a Sister City relationship was with Namur and that it was the Eisenhower Golf Classic. She also noted that her namespelled Petersen. was mis-spelled.

MOTION: By C Purcell, second by C Mathewson, to approve the Action Minutes of November 21, 2000.

Motion passed.

MOTION: By C Purcell, second by C Torre, to approve the Action Minutes of December 5, 2000, as corrected.

Motion passed. C Mathewson abstained.

MOTION: By C Purcell, second by C Torre, to approve the Action Minutes of December 19, 2000, as corrected.

Motion passed.

MOTION: By C Purcell, second by C Mathewson, to approve the Action Minutes of January 2, 2001, as corrected.

Motion passed. C Torre, C Petersen, and C Wiecha abstained.

STUDY SESSION: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing - 780 El Camino Real: To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Grading Plan, and Design Review to construct a 3,100 square foot retail commercial building on a triangularly-shaped 4,793 square foot lot located at the corner of El Camino Real and Middle Road. The proposed building includes landscaping improvements and eleven on-site parking spaces, which are accessed from a two-way driveway entrance on Middle Road. (Appl. No. 99-1122); APN: 044-222-018; Zoned: C-3 (Service Commercial); CEQA Status: Exempt; Frank Papadopolous-ApPLICANT/Owner.

CP Haag summarized the Staff Report and recommended approval with a condition of approval about the use of the building.

C Purcell mentioned that she called BFI, who said that their trucks drive down El Camino for garbage collection. BFI said that the location of the trash receptacle was not a problem.

Open Public Hearing

Norm Pennington, 16 Cobblestone Lane, was the immediate past President of the Antique Forest Homes Homeowners Association. His complex was adjacent to this proposed property. He opposed the project for retail usage. He felt that replacing the existing single-family residence with a commercial retail building would seriously impact traffic and congestion in the area of El Camino Real, Middle Road, and Cyprus Avenue. He noted that although it was zoned Service Commercial, it was adjacent to a residential neighborhood. He felt that the site could not adequately support a Commercial Retail building due to the size, shape, and location of the property. He believed that the street did not have sufficient capacity for the building because there was no parking on Middle Road, and there was only a single pedestrian walkway. There was limited parking on Cyprus Avenue as well. Cyprus Avenue was too narrow to allow unrestricted two-way traffic when vehicles were parked on the south side of the street. He felt that potential customers of this business would attempt to park on the sidewalk on Middle Road or Cyprus Avenue when on-site parking is at capacity. This would force pedestrians to walk in the street, therefore putting them at risk. He has noticed a steady increase in traffic, noise, and congestion in the immediate neighborhood. He felt that drivers waiting to enter this business would impede traffic in both directions on Middle Road and Cyprus Avenue. He was concerned that an eyesore could result from trash build-up. He felt that it would have a negative impact on residents' lives.

MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Purcell, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion passed.

C Petersen believed that the project appeared to have a lot of "loose ends" and may be a premature submittal. In the Design Review, there were still concerns surrounding grading and future occupancies. She felt that conditions of approval would be necessary to solve her lingering questions about the retaining wall, parking, grading plan, Geotechnical Report, and trash enclosure.

CP Haag said noted that there was a landscape plan had been prepared. He said the building would be built and then leased out to between one and three tenants. He agreed that there are loose ends concerning trash location, final landscape plan, and final sign plan, but these issues would depend on the user. Most of the retaining wall would be underground and would actually be the foundation of the parking garage. The only exposed part of the retaining wall would be a short piece along the side of the building.

C Purcell shared C Petersen's concerns about the exposed retaining wall, which she believed would be visible. She said that it was an improvement from the last presentation but still believed it to be too crowded for the site. She would not be in favor of moving the building forward because that would eliminate landscape. She said that the Design Review findings of this project were not connected to the Belmont Design Review Ordinance. PP de Melo said that the Design Review findings the Commission were accustomed to seeing focus on

Single-Family Design Review, where there are five specific findings, whereas Design Review findings for Commercial Buildings focus on the Design Review principles. There are actually no specific findings for Commercial Building Design Review. C Purcell said that she did not recall seeing these before and asked if they came in with the Design Review Ordinance. PP De Melo said these were the types of principles that generally were to be followed for Commercial projects.

C Wiecha had a few concerns about the ground story showing planters in front of the three entry doors but noticed that the elevation did not show them. CP Haag said that they were part of the project. In terms of the retaining wall, she too was concerned about the aesthetics with the split face block. She asked if the proposed use was compatible with other land uses in the general area and if it would not cause undue burden on the existing transportation facilities. She was concerned about the size of the site, the access to the parking from the single driveway, the maneuverability of the parking lot for vehicles, and the density. She felt that the structure would present a tremendous amount of bulk on the corner. This particular property was not within the strict limits of the Redevelopment district but there had been a good deal of leeway. The building was a big departure from those principles and guidelines. The elevator tower was not a great asset to the architectural design of the building. The building in general was stark and modern, and overall would not visually be an asset. Although almost anything would be an improvement over what was there currently, she would prefer to find a better usage.

C Mathewson had a couple of concerns about the significant amount of grading and the "crammed in" appearance of the parking. He felt the handicapped spots should be given more space. He agreed with the retaining wall concept. He said that if there were going to be three businesses within the building and only eleven spaces, he wondered how there would be enough space for the workers and customers. CP Haag agreed with C Mathewson's comment and explained that this was why staff recommended that the Commissioners and staff approve the building tenants. C Mathewson mentioned the Zoning Ordinance and that the project proposed a FAR a FAR of 0.65 actually however the Zoning Ordinance allowed s 1.5. He felt that the standards needed to be looked at.

C Torre was concerned that staff recommended shifting the project on the land in order to save on grading. She said this would change other elements of the project, and she could not visualize it. In terms of the concrete block, it seemed possible to put some landscaping around it that could droop over as long as it did not affect the parking spaces.

C Purcell asked about the General Plan's designation of Highway Commercial and the future zoning. The three-foot setback would be just enough space for children to run around. C Mathewson said that the C3 zoning standard stated that there was a zero setback and they were going to provide three feet. CP Haag said that on the north side there would be a zero lot line.

Chair Parsons was pleased to see that this project was a more appropriate use of the site than previously presented. His major concern was the ability to maneuver into the parking and the driveway location. However since Public Works reviewed it, he accepts their findings. He was concerned about the ability to maneuver cars in the parking lot on top of the building. He did not think it was acceptable to have a parking lot that drivers had to back out of. The two handicapped parking spaces would be hard to pull out of if both were occupied, especially if there was a van with a handicapped occupant. He did like the way the structure was built into the hillside and that there was not a lot of bulk to the building. He felt that the chosen material and the style of architecture needed an overhaul. He did not want to see any split block wall. The project needed more traditional aspects of Belmont's Downtown Guidelines. He liked the amount of landscaping the project included. There was public parking across the street, which could be a mitigating factor. He liked staff's idea of moving the trash compactor receptacle to the top as to cut down on visibility.

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Petersen, to continue to the March 20, 2001 Planning Commission meeting.

Ayes: Wiecha, Mathewson, Petersen, Purcell, Torre, Parsons
Absent: Gibson

Public Hearing - 2304 Casa Bona Avenue: To consider a Single Family Design Review to allow a 583 square foot addition to the upper and lower levels and garage of an existing 2,373 square foot two-story home for a total of 2,956 square feet of floor area where a maximum of 3,006 square feet is allowed. (Appl. No. 00-1088); APN: 044-042-100; Zoned: R-1C; CEQA Status: Exempt; George Belden and Kristen Tolomeo-ApPLICANT/Owners.

PP de Melo summarized the Staff Report.

Chair Parsons said that there was no clear indication of where the retaining wall was going to be located. He asked staff for a clarification of a bedroom because he saw the potential of this addition turning into a two additional bedrooms. PP de Melo said that generally a bedroom was seventy square feet and staff has been looking at whether the room included a closet. Chair Parsons said that he did not currently believe that a closet defined a bedroom. He said that this topic would need to be clarified further.

Applicant George Belden answered questions about where the retaining wall would be located and the expected amount of grading. He said that the driveway would be raised approximately four feet, however at the street level, it will not be raised at all. The retaining wall will vary between zero and four feet. The driveway would be approximately six feet off of the property line. The retaining wall would not be on the property line. Chair Parsons asked if it was Belden's intention to remove the retaining wall that was currently in front of his house. Mr. Belden said it appeared that the garage was built

after the house. The retaining wall would be moved ten feet closer to the street.

Open Public Hearing

MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Mathewson, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion Passed.

C Purcell said that it was an improvement of the floor plan, although she was confused about the retaining wall.

C Torre thought it was an improved floor plan and a good project. She agreed about the confusion surrounding what defines a bedroom. However, in this case, the applicant would be expanding the garage and therefore it would not be a problem.

C Mathewson agreed that the project appeared to improve the home. He was interested in details on the retaining wall and would have appreciated a grading plan, even though there would be very little grading. He too said that this had the possibility of becoming a higher numbered bedroom house.

Chair Parsons said this addition was an improvement to the house as far as function. The driveway would be much safer and there would be a two-car garage. His concern was that there was no information on the retaining wall. He wanted to know what kind of material would be used on the retaining wall and believed that there would have to be architectural treatment on the wall because the neighbors would have to look at it. He trusted staff to make sure that there was a decent finish. He asked that the current retaining wall have a more appropriate finish since it is over six feet. Currently the driveway was paved all the way to the property line and he asked that the pavement between the retaining wall and property line be removed because it is unsightly. He wanted an added condition for it to be restored to landscaping or a walkway. Another added condition should be that since the applicant would be taking a large tree out, he felt that it would be appropriate to replace it with another large tree, not a large scrub as proposed.

MOTION: By C Purcell, second by C Petersen, to approve a Single-Family Design Review for 2304 Casa Bona Avenue, with the added conditions that a bigger tree be planted, that the concrete at the front of the driveway be removed and landscaped, and that there be architectural treatment for the retaining wall.

Ayes: Torre, Purcell, Petersen, Mathewson, Wiecha, Parsons
Absent: Gibson

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - 2020 Alden Street: To consider a Single Family Design Review and Setback Variance to add 701 square feet to an existing 2,239 square foot single story residence for a total of 2,940 square feet. The remodel will add 52 square feet to the existing one-car garage to accommodate two cars, add 209 square feet on the first floor to accommodate a new family room and add a new 440 square foot second story addition to allow a master bedroom, walk-in closet and bath. (Appl.) No. 00-1089; APN: 040-290-430; Zoned: R-1C; CEQA Status: Exempt; Reza Khosh-Applicant; Mr. And Mrs. Tognani-Owners.

CP Schimpp summarized the Staff Report, recommended approval, and informed the Commission that the applicant was present. She made a correction to the Staff Report that rather than thirty-seven cubic yards of cut to develop the new grade, that there would be seventy-three cubic yards. She recommended an added condition that the applicant be required to submit plans for a grading permit from Public Works for the seventy-three yards of excavation.

Chair Parsons asked if the stone on the foundation of the house would be removed. Mr. Khosh said it would be. Mr. Khosh said that the retaining wall would be concrete with half-stone face finish. The existing retaining wall needed to be repaired. There would be a retaining wall all the way along the front and up to the garage door. The windows in the front of the house were not going to be replaced.

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Purcell, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion passed.

C Torre said that all the findings could be made but she would like to have seen some landscaping plans for the front of the building given that so much is being put into beautifying the building.

Chair Parsons asked if the project could be approved conditional to the applicant coming back in with a landscape plan for the front of the house. PP de Melo said it was possible.

C Wiecha agreed with the previous concerns regarding the retaining wall. She would like to see the retaining wall complement the existing retaining wall up the street in terms of the stone facing. She definitely wanted landscaping, with some trees, in the front to soften the facade of the building. She was glad that the garage was being upgraded and therefore accepted the shorter driveway.

Chair Parsons believed that since the driveway was so cracked that Public Works would make the applicant install a new driveway. PP de Melo said that this was usually a condition of approval when the driveway was cracked.

C Petersen said that she liked the second garage, and the shortened driveway was not a big problem.

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Mathewson, to approve a Single-Family Design Review and Setback Variance at 2020 Alden Street, with the added conditions that the applicant submit a Grading Permit as well as come back with a final retaining wall design and landscape plan that incorporates trees in the front yard.

CDD Ewing asked if the wall design and landscape plans were to return to staff or the Commission. Chair Parsons said that they should return to the Commission.

Ayes: Torre, Purcell, Petersen, Mathewson, Wiecha, Parsons
Absent: Gibson

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - 1905 Hillman Ave: To consider a Single Family Design Review to expand an existing bedroom, kitchen and dining room/add a laundry room and bath/closet area. The remodel will add 462 square feet to the existing 936 square foot residence for a total of 1,2398 square feet in a zoning district that permits 3,500 square feet. (Appl. No. 00-0037); APN: 044-064-360; Zoned R-1B; CEQA Status: Exempt; Charles Tehauno-Applciant; Craig and Miriam Newton-Owners.

C Mathewson recused himself because he lives within 300 ft. of the property.

CP Schimpp summarized the Staff Report and informed the Commission that the applicant was present.

C Torre asked if there was any discussion of adding a garage in the front of the house where the uncovered parking space currently was. She noted that the small study was seventy square feet. She asked if there was any design consideration as to how to add a garage to this house. CP Schimpp said that initially there was discussion of a trellis to cover the parking space, but this would be considered an accessory structure that would not be conforming to the Zoning Ordinance. Any garage would have to be placed in front of the front bedroom, which would in turn, impact the light into the bedroom. She said that there was no alternative for parking on-site, except in the front yard.

Applicant Charles Tehauno said that the main considerations for not adding a garage to the front of the house was to maintain the light into the bedrooms and to try to avoid the Variance process. C Torre believed that a twenty by twenty-foot structure could fit into the space without affecting the light. CDD Ewing said that there would not be enough space.

Open Public Hearing

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Purcell, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion passed.

C Wiecha thought it was a good project and had no objections. She saw the project as a small cottage with additional space being built in the back but no additional bedrooms. She thought that this maintained the small housing sector of Belmont and would not have supported a garage in the front-yard setback.

C Torre believed it to be an attractive cottage. She felt that the office could become a bedroom; however in terms of consistency, she supported it as proposed. She thought that the Commission should require a garage expansion based on the total amount of expansion. If an applicant is putting a good amount of money into increasing the size of the house, she did not feel it was unreasonable to ask that some money go into the garage. However, she did recognize that on some sites, it is more challenging and this added requirement may stop owners from adding on to their homes.

C Purcell said it was a good project that would enlarge the house and add convenience without trying to make it too big or destroying it. Her only problem was that she felt it was too much grading. From the design standpoint, she wondered if the owners would want a window to go along with the trellis.

Chair Parsons said it was a charming house and it was an improvement, however the office could easily become a bedroom. He felt it was impractical to construct a garage on the site.

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Torre, to approve a Single-Family Design Review at 1905 Hillman Avenue.

Ayes: Torre, Purcell, Petersen, Wiecha, Parsons

Absent: Gibson

Recuse: Mathewson

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - 1513 Escondido Way: To consider a Single Family Design Review to remodel two existing bedrooms and one bathroom, add a combination living room/dining room and one bedroom, and expand from a one-car to a two-car garage. The remodel will add 1,083 square feet to the existing 1,792 square foot residence for a total of 2,875 square feet in a zoning district that permits 4,500 square feet. (Appl. No. 00-1098); APN: 045-102-040; Zoned R-1H; CEQA Status: Exempt; Charles and Marie Rinaldi-Applicant/Owners.

CP Schimpp summarized the Staff Report.

Chair Parsons noticed that there was fireplace in the living room on the plans but it was not shown on the elevations.

Applicant Charles Rinaldi said that the house was currently three bedroom, two bath and he was simply reconfiguring the space to make it more conforming. There was no ventilation in the children's rooms.

Open Public Hearing

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Mathewson, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion Passed.

C Torre said that it would be an improvement to the house, but the garage design bothered her. Currently there was a balance but with the addition, she felt that there would be a tunnel effect.

C Petersen said that she understood why the owners wanted to expand the house, and she appreciated that the design was in line with the rest of the neighborhood.

C Wiecha agreed with C Torre's remark about the tunnel effect and there would not be very much light allowed in.

Chair Parsons said that besides the tunnel effect, it was a nice project. He confirmed that the yellow doors and shutters were being removed.

MOTION: By C Mathewson, second by C Purcell, to approve the Single-Family Design Review at 1513 Escondido Way.

Ayes: Wiecha, Mathewson, Petersen, Purcell, Torre, Parsons
Absent: Gibson

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Chair Parsons called for a break at 8:40PM. Meeting resumed at 8:50PM.

Public Hearing - 313 Chesterton Avenue: To consider a Single Family Design Review to expand an existing kitchen, garage and family room and add a second story that includes two bedrooms and one bathroom to an existing single-story residence. The remodel will add 1,289 square feet to an existing 1,464 square foot residence for a total of 2,753 square feet in a zoning district that permits 3,500 square feet. (Appl. No. 00-1090); APN: 040-245-040; Zoned R-1C; CEQA Status:

Exempt; Daniel Biermann-Applicant; Yukie Calhoun-Owner.

AP Ouse summarized the Staff Report and recommended approval.

C Torre asked staff about how the placement of the windows on the second floor addition would affect the privacy of the surrounding properties. AP Ouse said that the windows would be setback from the existing rear of the house causing minimal effects on privacy.

C Torre asked if the bathroom on the ground floor was meant to be a "powder room" for guests. If not, she felt that it should be a full bath instead of the currently proposed half bath. She asked why there was no door between the master bedroom and bath. Applicant Daniel Biermann said that the separation between the half and full bath downstairs was because the owner planned on having her mother live with her, yet wanted to retain some privacy. She wanted to be able to utilize the bathroom without disturbing her mother. As for the upper floor, the owner and her daughter will be sharing the bathroom, and this was a conscious choice.

C Purcell asked why there was a large kitchen and yet small dining room. She wondered why more space was not being added to the dining room instead of the kitchen and if this too was a conscious choice. Mr. Biermann said that they had explored the possibilities of having a breakfast room, but there was not quite enough space. The owner preferred a bigger kitchen.

Open Public Hearing

Neighbor Frank Graham, 222 Hiller Street, lives directly behind the proposed site. He spoke to the line of sight in between the tight homes. It is not currently a problem but could be an issue down in the future between other neighboring houses. He did not want to tell the owner how to do her remodel, and therefore he worked out a solution with the owner as to not create a privacy problem.

MOTION: By C Purcell, second by C Mathewson, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion passed.

MOTION: By C Mathewson, second by C Purcell, to approve the Single Family Design Review at 313 Chesterton.

C Wiecha commented that given the substantial amount of demolition with this project, she was concerned that this project would end up being a "tear-down" once the work begins. She asked the applicant if there had been any engineering review addressing if the house would be able to support the proposed remodel. Mr. Biermann answered that the existing house was constructed on a slab and because of

this, variations in terms of demolition are sometimes less because no foundation has to be removed.

Ayes: Torre, Purcell, Petersen, Mathewson, Wiecha, Parsons
Absent: Gibson

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

Public Hearing - 100 El Camino Real: To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Height Variance, and Design Review to locate a Planet Granite rock climbing gym/workout facility within the existing vacant Belmont Theatre. The proposed interior building modifications include installation of various climbing walls, yoga studio, weight/fitness area, men's/women's changing areas, main lobby and retail sales area. Proposed exterior modifications include removal of the existing roof (41 feet in height) with a taller roof (45 feet in height) to accommodate the height of the interior climbing walls. (Appl. No. 00-0040); APN: 044-151-080; Zoned: C-3 (Highway Commercial); CEQA Status: Exempt; Mark Lloyd-Applicant; West Side Valley Theatres-Owner.

PP de Melo summarized the Staff Report, recommended approval, and informed the Commission that the applicant was present.

C Torre said that there were several conditions of project approval from other departments in the City that are actually just expressive comments and not conditions. She asked if there was any proposed language for conditions. PP de Melo said that if the Commission approved the phase, the project would undergo vigorous review by all of the departments again. Each department had provided comments but not the wording such that the comments are expressed as that "the applicant shall.

C Purcell asked about the sandblast on the windows and about any alternatives. PP de Melo said he would have the applicant and applicant's architect answer that question because there are Design Review principles associated with the design of the project, however, potential alternatives could be looked at for the window design.

C Torre asked about the landscaping in the front of the building where there are portions of space between the sidewalk and wall. She asked if there was consideration about additional landscaping as a person would enter the building. She suggested that there may be room for planters boxes. PP de Melo said that the area needed to be available for pedestrian accessibility, and street trees and landscaping have been placed in locations that are appropriate. C Torre asked if there was room along the El Camino Real frontage. PP de Melo said that six feet six inches from the face of the wall to the face of the curb was not enough room to provide landscaping as well as provide the necessary pedestrian access. If there was a greater distance, such as eight to twelve feet, then

there would more opportunities. He believed that the minimum ADA requirement for pedestrian walkways was forty-two inches or three and a half feet. C Torre confirmed that there would be space at the front entrance that met those requirements.

Chair Parsons said that since there has already been a Preliminary Design Review, which had the Commission's consensus that this was an appropriate use for the site, parking was not an issue, and liked the idea of Planet Granite, he asked that these issues not be discussed again in the applicant's presentation.

Applicant Mark Lloyd addressed the height issue and its importance to the project. He felt that a height of forty-five feet was necessary to compete with similar structured gyms. He said that he would be fine adopting any glazing solution for the majority of the windows, however the bathroom windows were already in place. As for landscape, he said that the area in front of the building was tight, however there may be space towards the entranceways. The sign had been toned down, as previously recommended by the Commission. He showed the color board, which contained samples of different finishes, but did not have a glazing sample board. He has attempted to keep the metal roof dark and the high points of the building positioned towards the rear. He said that there would be no additional brickwork besides what was already in place. There would be new windows on the second story, which would have plain glazing. He confirmed that there would be skylights in the roof with translucent plastic. He decided against asking for a fifty feet height allowance because he did not want to be greedy when asking for a Variance.

Open Public Hearing

Steve Eckert, 1814 Oak Knoll, was pleased to see the Belmont Theatre turned into something useful. He was surprised to see the sign being retained but thought it was a good idea because it has been a landmark.

Ed Everett, City Manager of Redwood City and previous City Manager of Belmont, said he has wanted this type structure in Redwood City but has been unable to bid high enough. The listed community benefits for this project were the following: 1. an environmentally clean entertainment and recreational use, 2. a place for family recreation, 3. will attract people to Belmont, which will help other businesses. By granting a minor height Variance, Belmont would have a premier-climbing wall in Belmont.

MOTION: By C Mathewson, second by C Petersen, to close the Public Hearing.

Motion Passed.

C Purcell stated that she would have approved a fifty-foot height Variance. Chair Parsons said that the fifty-foot issue

was not on the agenda and therefore could not be discussed this evening.

C Mathewson was pleased to keep the tall Belmont sign. He said that as an additional condition he wanted additional landscaping around the corner, to the extent feasible. C Torre wanted to second that it be a condition. She said that the Belmont sign tended to block the peak of the roof.

C Purcell liked that the sign will remain although the building will change its use, it could still be seen as a City landmark. It was a unique building and it demanded the extra height.

C Wiecha supported the additional planter along the doorway and thought that the colors were a nice choice. She initially wanted the sign taken down because it was an eyesore, but when looking at the current proposal, it appeared to be too much unnecessary labor to remove it.

Chair Parsons wanted landscaping on both sides of the entrance. He suggested some small pockets along the brick facade of the large, plain wall to allow some type of fig to grow up the wall. He said that an associated sprinkler system would be needed. He did not object to the Belmont sign remaining as well.

MOTION: By C Wiecha, second by C Mathewson, to approve a Conditional Use Permit, Variance, and Design Review at 100 El Camino Real, with the additional condition to increase the landscaping in the described area.

Ayes: Torre, Purcell, Petersen, Mathewson, Wiecha, Parsons
Absent: Gibson

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within 10 days.

NEW BUSINESS:

Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting:

CDD Ewing asked for the Commission's suggestions on topics to be discussed in the Joint Meeting. He suggested that three items be discussed in the one-hour meeting. It was decided that no final decisions would be made at this meeting but instead the Commissioners would wait until staff could consolidate the topics to be ranked and voted on. CDD Ewing asked for summarized descriptions about the preferred topics.

C Wiecha asked if the hour would be better spent discussing ordinances or specific projects. Chair Parsons suggested discussing Design Review in order to ensure that the Council and Commission are looking at a similar set of standards. C Wiecha said that FAR needed to be discussed because there was no agreed upon definition to base decisions on.

CDD Ewing said that privacy was currently not in the findings for Design Review, and therefore it was not in the domain of the Commission to base a decision on the privacy issue. Also, there was the question of how much impact the neighbors' opinions should have over the approval of a project.

C Torre said that she's been having a problem with the right-to-built on new, little parcels. She felt that there was a difference between redevelopment of an existing single-family home and the building of a new home. She was unclear on what the authority was of the Commission. CDD Ewing informed her that Council has been looking at this issue as well. C Torre said that she was interested in the new City Manager's report about the economics of the region driving redevelopment. She said that the population changes housing needs.

CDD Ewing stated that he noticed a common focus on single family development instead of commercial or multi-family development. Specific issues included redevelopment on marginal lots, house size relative to lot size, parking on single-family lots, and neighbor notification.

C Wiecha wanted resources to be put into upgrading and updating El Camino Real before putting resources into Old County Road. She also asked about the future of transient oriented development. CDD Ewing stated that these issues should be discussed as part of the General Plan process because the public should have input. Staff was put in charge of drawing up a draft of Joint Meeting topics.

The Commission asked what issues they were allowed to discuss at their upcoming conference in Monterey. CA Zafferrano said that outside of a publicly noticed meeting, the Commission could not discuss or decide on a specific project without violating the Brown Act. CDD Ewing said that the conference would give the Commissioners the ability to see how other cities dealt with similar issues.

**PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL
MEETING OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2001:**

Commissioner Petersen

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM to a meeting on Wednesday March 7, 2001 at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP

Planning Commission Secretary

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*Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for
review*

in the Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.

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